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## BOOK REVIEWS.

THE NEW STATE: Group Organization the Solution of Popular Government. By M. P. Follett. New York, London, Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras: Longmans, Green and Co., 1918. Pp. 373. Price, \$3.00 net.

"The New State" essays a critical analysis of our political situation and a constructive principle for its improvement. It is singularly fresh in its treatment, and frequently brilliant in its style. Its distinguishing merit is its employment of social psychology, first for a more fundamental analysis of the situation than the more familiar categories of "corruption," "machine rule" and the like afford, and second for a way out. The word "new," in the title is used not as a time word, but as signifying "vital." The problem is, how to have a really vital state?

For there is no question that just now the state, once the idealists' idol and the socialists' hope, has of late been discredited from many sides. From without, the trade unionist, syndicalist, high churchman, internationalist, and even the socialist is jealous or distrustful. From within, its candid citizen must confess that its actual working is often grotesquely unlike its professed aims, and tragically inept for the great tasks which it should perform. Representative government, once hailed as the great political discovery, is now charged with failure and direct government is proposed. The pathetic ineffectiveness of individual action is matched by the machine character of party rule. Self government, measurably simple for the small homogeneous community, is an unsolved problem under present conditions.

The root of these futilities, according to the author of "The New State" is disclosed by social psychology. We have vibrated between two untenable positions: false individualism and crowd or herd collectivism. An individual alone is futile. He can accomplish nothing. He cannot even think or plan except as his powers are brought out by contact and interaction with others. To multiply such individuals by sending more of them to ballot boxes, or by sending them more often to the ballot box accomplishes nothing valuable; it merely counts one individual after another. Nor does party rule improve things. It submerges the individual and substitutes crowd action which is less

intelligent than the action of individual members would be. Democracy in any true sense is not just "liberty and equality," nor is it the majority, nor the crowd. What is needed for vital organization is a type of association which shall not merely take the individual as he is and count him, but shall bring him out—make him wiser by contact and discussion, stronger by co-operation. It must be large enough to give power, but small enough to enable and indeed to compel each member to contribute to the joint output. Its method must be discussion rather than imitation. Group organization, not ballot-box democracy or crowd action, is democracy's method. "The most salient political fact to-day is the increasing amount and power of group life—trade unions, professional societies, citizens leagues, neighborhood associations, etc. The most pressing political problem is the relation of all these groups to one another and to the state."

The type of groups which seem to the author most promising as the basis of a "new," that is a "vital" state, is the neighborhood group. The neighborhood now occasionally meets for a specific purpose; what is needed is the more continuous and responsible organization found in germ in community centres, school centres, and the like. "With the inclusion of all men and women (practically accomplished) in the suffrage, with the rapidly increasing acceptance of direct government, the *extensive* work of the democratic impulse has ended. Now the intensive work of democracy must begin." "We hear discussed from time to time how far public opinion governs the world, but at present there is no public opinion." Government is supposed to express the will of the people. "But there is no will of the people. We talk glibly about it but the truth is that it is such a very modern thing that it does not yet exist." A chaos of ideas, an urge of the crowd, the voice of an interest or a party—yes, but is this public opinion? A real public opinion,—an opinion better and larger than the opinion of any one of us,—must be created, built up by joint effort. A social will must be brought into being; it does not exist ready made. Political life began in the small group. In expanding to the rational state our political life has not kept pace with our political machinery. We must turn back to the local unit again for the vitalizing springs.

But this assumes that a unifying state is desirable. Is this true? Syndicalists, and various political pluralists deny this. The labor unionist of to-day is as jealous of state control as is the

High Churchman, and is not occupational representation a more rational plan than local representation? Miss Follett finds a half truth in all these challenges. She admits also that some of these very groups which aspire to practical sovereignty, *e.g.*, trade unions, are indeed suffering internally from the same outworn representative system or centralized government as is our political state.

But she holds that it is as fallacious to talk of "the group vs. the state" as to talk of "the man vs. the state." The problem is one of federalization. There is no inherent reason why the new state—the service state—shall not use all these various professional, employing, and labor groups instead of ignoring or fighting them.

Finally the moral state and the world state are likewise not gifts but activities. Sovereignty is an outworn category with which to face tasks of constructive statesmanship.

As to the first half of the book which shows the defects in our present political situation, I think little exception can be taken. Public opinion, which we assume controls our decisions, is a matter which is at present as little under intelligent control almost as the lightning was before the day of Franklin. We have no assurance that our newspaper organs are giving us the basis for judgment; still less can we hand over our own judgment to the editorial group knowing as we do the influences which work upon it. And on such momentous questions as entrance upon war or formation of a league of nations our policies seem often capable of determination by some single great personality, a Lincoln or a Wilson. Such a great personality may be wise, as these were, but he may not be; in any case the basis of democratic opinion does not seem to be broad and firm.

As regards the constructive suggestions of the book, the most serious question is likely to be the adequacy or workability of the neighborhood group, for the task put upon it. One difficulty felt by the city dweller—to borrow Miss Follett's mode of expression—is that there is no neighborhood,—at least in certain regions. Where people are nearly all renters, and shift from year to year or even from month to month, it is almost impossible to get any group consciousness. And when industrial conditions or land values classify people and fix their residences, neighbors are too much of a kind to give the most fruitful group contacts. Our churches are many of them paralyzed by this condition.

They tend to become class organizations—and perhaps through no fault of their own. Our city schools are not “common” in a very inclusive sense. I should hold, therefore, that before we can get very far with any political regeneration along the lines of neighborhood groups we should find it necessary to face the economic forces which at present make neighborhood consciousness almost impossible. This is not to minimize the importance of social psychology’s contribution; it is simply to point out its limitations.

The author should have thought well enough of her book to provide an index.

JAMES H. TUFTS.

PROBLEMS OF THE SELF. By John Laird, M.A., Professor of Logic and Metaphysics in the Queen’s University of Belfast. London: Macmillan & Co., 1917. Pp. xiii, 375. Price, 12s. net.

The Shaw Lectures in Edinburgh University have been the occasion of some notable volumes; and it may be said at once that Professor Laird’s work is eminently worthy to stand in the series. It has the great merit of admirable clearness both in plan and execution. It takes an important and difficult subject, defines the limits within which the question will be discussed, within those limits surveys the ground in a carefully detailed but systematic fashion, and arrives at definitely formulated results. Probably the only complaint which anyone is likely to make about the method of exposition would concern the inclusion of a good deal of historical matter, which at some points does not appear seriously to advance the thesis. But in an argument which depends so much on the precise use of terms which have long been tokens in philosophical currency, some such discussion is almost inevitable. In any case, one should be prepared to work through all that is given for the sake of one or two more or less casual exegeses which Professor Laird offers. The comments on Kant’s ethical theory, *e.g.*, with which Chapter VII begins, seem to me very happy and illuminating.

The subject of the book may be very simply stated. Psychology until it became very critical of itself in Hume, conceived itself to be the science of the soul or the self. Professor Laird asks precisely in what sense psychology is entitled to use the terms “soul” or “self”: or in other words, in what kind of soul,